

REMARKS

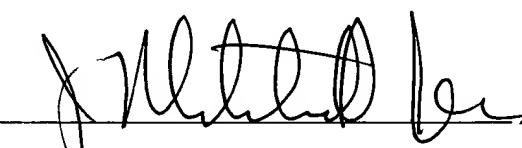
Claims 1, 4-9, 11-16, 24-27, and 29-34 are pending in the present application. The Claims currently stand rejected as allegedly being anticipated or obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,471,669 (hereinafter "Lidman"). Applicants thank the Examiner for the interview conducted on June 17, 2004. In the interview, the Examiner indicated that the prior art could be overcome by amending the claims to specify that the Rebate Network Manager is a computer other than the merchants computer. Applicants have amended the claims to specify the computer processor of the Rebate Network Manager is at a location other than the location of the merchant. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the presently presented claims are free of the prior art and request that the 102(b) and 103 rejections over Lidman be removed. These amendments have been made in order to further the business interests of the applicants and in no way constitute an admission that the claims as originally filed are not patentable. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute the claims as originally presented in a future continuing application.

Additionally, Applicants dispute the Examiner's contention in the Office Action that certain aspects of the Examiner's previous arguments be deemed as admissions by the Applicants. Applicants distinguished the rejections by the Examiner on other grounds (i.e., the independent claims were argued to be patentable over the prior), thus it was unnecessary to specifically rebut the Examiner's arguments with respect to aspects of some of the dependent claims. Accordingly, Applicants do not believe that the Examiner's arguments regarding admissions have a factual or legal basis.

CONCLUSION

All grounds of rejection of the Office Action of April 27, 2004 have been addressed and reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested. It is respectfully submitted that Applicant's new claims should be passed into allowance. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone interview would aid in the prosecution of this application Applicant encourages the Examiner to call the undersigned collect at (608) 218-6900.

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